



Ian, the beneficiary of the estate

Man shocked to be heir to estate

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Reporter**
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THE heir to an estate was shocked to be told he was one of its beneficiaries after the death of an unknown uncle.

Robert Brian Heavens, from London, died in Westminster in January 2017 at the age of 87, leaving no will and having no surviving relatives.

His estate was then listed on the Government's Bona Vacantia list.

Professional probate genealogists and stars of BBC Heir Hunters, Finders International, took on the case to track down any heirs to his estate.

The team found that Robert was not an only child and he actually had seven half-siblings.

His father Frank Corrie Heaven was born in Wandsworth and was 70 at the time of Robert's birth.

On further research, the team discovered that Frank had been married before and had six children – before he "disappeared".

These were all unknown half-blood siblings of the deceased. One of these half-blood siblings,

background

FINDERS International was established by Danny Curran in 1997 who became managing director of the company.

The team at Finders pride themselves on being able to solve the most complex cases with the utmost efficiency.

The team of international probate genealogists, or heir hunters as they have become known, have featured on the BBC1 TV show Heir Hunters.

They work with people who are keen to find out more about their long-lost relatives and to help trace unknown heirs, such as Ian, who found out he had an uncle he never knew about.

Mabel had a son Ian, from Peacehaven, who is an heir to the estate and Robert's half-blood nephew.

After discovering the news, Ian said: "It was totally unbelievable when the man first came to the house."

"It took me a long time to take it all in."

"It is a shock that I'm going to be a beneficiary to a relative who I never knew existed."

"This was my uncle or half-uncle which makes it all the more unbelievable."

Frank's second marriage to Marjorie, Robert's mother, meant that he didn't have contact with his first family and they never knew what happened to him.

Ian added: "We just knew that Frank had disappeared and we didn't ever know that he had remarried or had another son."

"When the gentleman came in and we sat down and talked it all through and I realised it all fell into place as he had the paperwork with him, and the relations all panned out in front of me."

Before the First World War, Frank was a butcher but was then enlisted to become a gunner.

When he returned from the war, it was likely his job was no longer there so in the 1930s he became a milkman to provide for his growing family.

At the time of the Second World War, Frank was 60 and when all the men were going off to the war, a lot of their jobs became available.

He then started working in the Government ministry where he met his second wife, Marjorie.

There were seven beneficiaries to the estate in total.

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